

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, the drawings are replaced with the attached replacement drawing sheets.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies extended Applicants' representative during the telephone conference held May 13, 2004. Applicants' separate record of the substance of the telephone conference is incorporated into the following remarks.

I. The Drawings Satisfy All Formal Requirements

The attached replacement drawing sheets replace the original drawing sheets. Prompt acceptance of the drawings is respectfully requested.

II. The Specification Satisfies All Formal Requirements

The Office Action objects to the disclosure because of informalities. Specifically, the Office Action asserts that the letter "e" is missing from certain terms found in the specification. The Examiner confirmed during the May 13 telephone conference that the letter "e" asserted by the Office Action to be missing in certain terms is not missing in the same terms of the application as filed. As such, the Examiner withdrew the objection to the disclosure during the telephone conference.

III. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 1-11 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,684,627 to Mizuno. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Mizuno fails to disclose a method of purifying exhaust gas wherein a sulfur-solidifying agent is supplied to the engine, and the amount of supplying the sulfur-solidifying agent to the engine is controlled depending upon the condition of the atmosphere at the catalyst, as recited in claim 1; a method of purifying exhaust gas wherein a sulfur-solidifying agent is supplied to the engine, and the amount of supplying the sulfur-solidifying agent to the engine is controlled depending upon the operating condition of the engine, as recited in

claim 4; or a method of purifying exhaust gas wherein a sulfur-solidifying agent is supplied to the engine, and the amount of supplying the sulfur-solidifying agent to the engine is controlled depending upon the NOx occluding capability of the NOx occluding and reducing catalyst, as recited in claim 10.

Instead, Mizuno discloses that the sulfur-solidifier can be added in an intake path, in a combustion chamber, or in the exhaust path, and that it is feasible to select the position and timing of addition of the sulfur solidifier suitable for the solidification reaction and to adjust a loading amount according to the operational status of the internal combustion engine or the like, thus contributing to increase in the solidification efficiency of the sulfur component (col. 2, lines 37-48).

As such, Mizuno merely discloses adjusting a loading amount according to the operational status of the internal combustion engine. Thus, Mizuno does not provide any one of the features of controlling the supply of the sulfur-solidifying agent to the engine depending upon the condition of the atmosphere at the catalyst, controlling the supply of the sulfur-solidifying agent to the engine depending upon the operating condition of the engine, or controlling the supply of the sulfur-solidifying agent to the engine depending upon the NOx occluding capability of the NOx occluding and reducing catalyst.

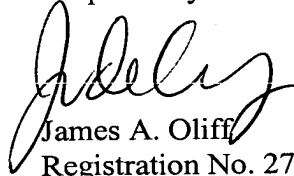
Thus, none of the applied art disclose all of the features of any of claims 1, 4 or 10. As such, for at least the reasons discussed above, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 4 and 10 are distinguishable over the applied art. Furthermore, those claims which depend from claims 1, 4 and 10 are likewise distinguishable over the applied art for at least the reasons discussed above, as well as for additional features they recite. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:JLC/aaw

Attachment:

Replacement Drawing Sheets (Figs. 1-13)

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